Easing of visa rules for Chinese

†1259. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India propose to ease its stringent visa rules in a phased manner for the Chinese with the purpose of attracting Chinese tourists as well as establishing better relations between the two neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) During the visit of Prime Minister to China, a Memorandum of Understanding on Simplifying Visa Procedures was signed. This MoU lays down mutually agreed streamlined procedures for the issue of visas in various categories such as business, employment, tourism, students, conferences, short-term academic and cultural exchanges, etc.

Use of Hindi in UNO

†1260. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have so far been taken by Government for providing proper place to the Hindi language in UNO;

(b) If so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c) A High Level Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Minister of External Affairs, with the Minister of State for External Affairs (Sh. Digvijay Singh) as Vice-Chairman, in connection with the objective of including Hindi as one of the Official Languages of the United Nations. The Government will consider the suggestions made by the Committee and take action as deemed necessary.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.